

This report is designed to enable health plans, the Medical Assistance Administration (MAA), and other organizations to monitor and evaluate the performance of Medicaid Healthy Options and statewide managed care programs in Washington State. Assessments were based on health care services and experiences of adults enrolled in Healthy Options. This report describes the background of the Medicaid Consumer Assessment of Health Plans (CAHPS) survey, the goals of the project, and how survey results may be interpreted by consumers, health plans, and other stakeholders.

Project Background

The CAHPS survey tools were developed under cooperative agreements among Harvard Medical School, the RAND Institute, the Research Triangle Institute, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. A version of CAHPS has been implemented in Washington State by MAA for seven years. In the CAHPS Adult survey, respondents provide information about their experiences with various aspects of medical care, including:

- Getting Needed Care
- Getting Care Quickly
- How Well Doctors Communicate
- Courteous and Helpful Office Staff
- Customer Service
- Overall Satisfaction Ratings
 - Rating of Personal Doctor or Nurse
 - Rating of Specialist
 - Rating of All Health Care
 - Rating of Health Plan

A copy of the CAHPS Adult survey instrument is available by calling 360-725-1618, or by sending an e-mail request to geimecd1@dshs.wa.gov. Trend data over the past seven years are also available.

Project Goals

The primary goal of the Medicaid CAHPS project is to provide timely and comparative information to clients to assist them in choosing a health plan. This information was collected through mail and telephone surveys that assessed clients' experiences with the health care system and the services they received through Healthy Options. This year's CAHPS survey results are included in the 2004 Medicaid client enrollment materials.

MAA's second goal is to provide performance feedback that will be used to improve Medicaid clients' outcomes and satisfaction. CAHPS results are being provided to health plans with the expectation that they will be used to identify and correct problems and be integrated into comprehensive performance improvement projects at the health plan, provider group, and individual provider levels of the health care delivery system.